Organic Agriculture In New Hampshire



OVERVIEW

Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments in U.S. agriculture. From 1995 through 2011, the acres of certified organic cropland rose from 638,500 to more than 3.1 million; organically certified pasture acres rose from 276,300 to over 2.3 million; and the total number of organic certified livestock and poultry rose from 3.1 million to over 36.1 million.

In New Hampshire, the value of organic agricultural sales totaled over \$15M million in 2012.

As compared with conventional agricultural production techniques, organic farming practices typically result in improved water quality, healthy animals, reduced soil erosion and overall improved soil quality. Soil organic matter is increased by using manures and compost as fertilizers, growing cover crops and green manure, practicing crop rotations, and by growing more acres of perennial crops. Water quality is

often improved by the avoidance of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

If you are interested in making your organic operation environmentally sustainable, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has the technical and financial resources to help you reach your conservation goals.

LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The 2014 Farm Bill highlights the availability of financial and technical assistance to help all producers meet their conservation goals. It specifically includes help to organic agricultural producers. It also offers rewards for producers who already practice good stewardship on their land.

CONSERVATION PLANNING

For more than 75 years, NRCS (known as the Soil Conservation Service until 1994) has placed a high priority on helping agricultural producers with conservation plans to meet their environmental and economic goals, while concurrently planning for the protection of the soil, water, air and wildlife resources.

Conservation goals are highly individual and may include boosting pollinator populations, increasing biodiversity including soil-borne organisms, enhancing water quality,

and controlling invasive species.

NRCS conservationists work with farmers to come up with scientifically-sound alternatives for accomplishing their goals and working out a timeline to implement the conservation practices in the plan. This process begins with an on-site visit by NRCS to your farm to discuss your goals and assess any resource concerns.



Organic farming is one of the fastest growing segments in U.S. agriculture

Example practices for organic farmers include:

- Transition to Organic Plan: a custom plan for your farm created by an expert in organic production. Provides practical information for all areas of organic production and helps make the certification process easier.
- Cover Crops, Nutrient Management, Crop Rotation and Composting Facility: key practices to improve soil health and biological diversity.
- Rotational Grazing Plans, Forage and Biomass Planting, Fencing, and Watering Facilities: practices that improve forage quality, while providing livestock access to pasture.

All information provided to NRCS for conservation planning purposes is strictly confidential.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program assists agricultural producers to manage risk and voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations. AMA helps mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program for farmers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

For more information,

Call or stop by your area NRCS office, Or visit http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA-NRCS/Conservation District Offices

Belknap County Conservation District

2 Airport Rd., Mailbox #1, Gilford, NH 03249 603-527-5880

Concord Field Service Center Merrimack County Conservation District

10 Ferry St., Suite 211, Concord, NH 03301 603-223-6021

Conway Field Service Center

Carroll County Conservation District

73 Main St., Conway, NH 03818 603-447-2771

Epping Field Service Center

Knightly Plaza 629 Calef Highway, Suite 203 Epping, NH 03042 603-679-1587

Lancaster Field Service Center Coos County Conservation District

4 Mayberry Lane, Lancaster, NH 03584 603-788-4651

New Hampshire State Office

2 Madbury Rd.Durham, NH 03824603-868-7581

Milford Field Service Center Hillsborough County Conservation District

Chappell Professional Ctr., #468, Rte. 13 South, Milford, NH 03055 603-673-2409

Orford Field Service Center Grafton County Conservation District

19 Archertown Rd., Suite 1 Orford, NH 03777 603-353-4651

Rockingham County Conservation District

110 North Road, Brentwood, NH 03833 603-679-2790

Sullivan County Conservation District

95 County Farm Road Unity, NH 04743 603-542-4891

Strafford County Conservation District

264 County Farm Rd, Dover, NH 03820 603-749-3037

Walpole Field Service Center Cheshire County Conservation District

11 Industrial Park Dr. Walpole, NH 03608